

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A method for processing information, comprising:
 - a) maintaining a database of bar codes and destination information associated with the bar codes, the database being accessible by a remote device;
 - b) receiving information, at the remote device, from a plurality of bar code scanners, the received information from each bar code scanner including ~~source and~~ bar code information and source information identifying a user of the bar code scanners;
 - c) identifying at least a portion of the destination information stored in the database based on at least a portion of the received bar code information;
 - d) accessing from the remote device data stored at a network location referenced by the identified portion of the destination information; and
 - e) providing the data received by the remote device from the network location to users at least one user of at least one of the bar code scanners ~~scanner~~ based on the received source information.
2. (Cancelled)
3. (Cancelled)
4. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 1, ~~the information received~~

~~from the bar code scanners being in an encrypted form,~~ further comprising:

determining whether the information received from the bar code scanners being in an encrypted form; and

if so, decrypting the received information.

5. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein receiving the information from the bar code scanners comprises receiving user identification information associated with the bar code scanners.

6. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein receiving the information comprising:

receiving a portion of the destination information associated with the bar code information.

7. (Cancelled)

8. (Cancelled)

9. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, further comprising:
disassociating the bar codes with the destination information associated with those bar codes.

10. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, further comprising associating a bar code image file with one or more of the bar codes.

11. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, further comprising associating security information with one or more of the bar code scanners before allowing use of the one or more scanners.

12. (Cancelled)

13. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, further comprising receiving time information from one or more of the bar code scanners.

14. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, further comprising receiving location information from one or more of the bar code scanners.

15. (Cancelled)

16. (Cancelled)

17. (Cancelled)

18. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein the information

received by the remote device wirelessly.

19. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 4, wherein the network location is an Internet location.

20. (Currently Amended) A portal for processing information, comprising:

a) a first interface for receiving information from a plurality of bar code scanners, the received information from each bar code scanner including ~~source~~ and bar code information; and

b) a processor for:

identifying at least a portion of the destination information stored in a database based on at least a portion of the received bar code information, wherein the database includes destination information associated with one or more bar codes and the database being accessible by the processor,

accessing a network location referenced by the identified portion of the destination information, and

providing the data received from the network location to users of the bar code scanners ~~based on the received source information~~.

21. (Cancelled)

22. (Cancelled)

23. (Previously Presented) The portal according to claim 20, the information received from the bar code scanners being in an encrypted form, wherein the processor decrypts the received information.

24. (Previously Presented) The portal according to claim 20, wherein the processor receives identification information associated with the bar code scanners.

25. (Previously Presented) The portal according to claim 20, wherein the received information comprises a portion of the destination information associated with the bar codes.

26. (Cancelled)

27. (Cancelled)

28. (Previously Presented) The portal according to claim 20, wherein the bar codes are disassociated with the destination information associated with those bar codes.

29. (Previously Presented) The portal according to claim 20, wherein the processor associates a bar code image file with one or more of the bar codes.

30. (Previously Presented) The portal according to claim 20, wherein the processor associates security information with one or more of the bar code scanners before allowing use of the one or more bar code scanners.

31. (Cancelled)

32. (Previously Presented) The portal according to claim 20, wherein the first interface receives time information from one or more of the bar code scanners.

33. (Previously Presented) The portal according to claim 20, wherein the first interface receives location information from one or more of the bar code scanners.

34. (Cancelled)

35. (Cancelled)

36. (Cancelled)

37. (Previously Presented) The portal according to claim 20, wherein the first interface receives the information wirelessly.

38. (Previously Presented) The portal according to claim 20, wherein the network location is an Internet location.

39-115. (Cancelled)

116. (Currently Amended) A method for using a bar code encoded with information corresponding to an externally assigned entity, the bar code having an associated prefix portion, where the prefix portion indicates whether to deactivate encryption, the method comprising:

receiving information represented in ~~providing the bar code with a prefix portion of the bar code indicating whether the bar code is encrypt;~~

~~connecting a user to~~ the entity based on information represented in a telephone number or an Internet portal when the bar code is read with a bar code reader depending upon whether the bar code is encrypted and based on the information represented in the prefix portion; and

~~receiving transmitting information from the entity Internet portal to the user when the user connects to the Internet portal.~~

117-130. (Cancelled)

131. (Previously Presented) A method, comprising

receiving bar codes selected by a group of users using bar code readers;

allowing the group of users to connect to an Internet portal in response to receiving the

bar codes;

permitting the group of users to communicate with each other through a common web page based on information encoded in each bar code and based on destination information corresponding to the received bar codes, wherein the destination information is accessible from the Internet portal.

132. (Cancelled)

133. (New) The method according to claim 131, wherein receiving bar codes selected by a group of users further comprises:

receiving bar codes selected by a group of users using bar code readers each bar code associated with source information identifying a user of the bar code readers.

134. (New) The method according to claim 131, wherein allowing the group of users to connect, further comprises:

allowing at least one user to connect to the Internet Portal when encryption of bar code information is not indicated and not allowing the user to connect to the Internet Portal when encryption of the bar code information is indicated.

135. (New) The method according to claim 134, wherein allowing said at least one user to further comprises:

connecting said at least one user to a telephone number or the Internet Portal depending upon whether the encryption of the bar code is turned off.

136. (New) The method according to claim 135, further comprising:

providing data received from the Internet portal to said at least one user of at least one of the bar code readers based on the received source information.

137. (New) A method for processing information from a bar code, where the bar code has an associated prefix portion that indicates whether to deactivate encryption, comprising:

receiving, at a device, bar code information and information represented by the prefix portion; and

based on the information represented by the prefix portion, displaying at least a portion of the bar code information on a display associated with the device or connecting the device to a remote location indicated in the bar code information.

138. (New) The method according to claim 116, further comprising:

associating a precode with the bar code to indicate that the bar code is encoded with a telephone number, where the telephone number is associated with the entity.

139. (New) The method according to claim 116, wherein receiving the information represented by the prefix portion further comprises a bar code scanner receiving the information

represented in the prefix portion.

140. (New) The method according to claim 139, further comprising:
displaying at least a portion of the information represented in the bar code on a local display associated with the bar code scanner based on the prefix portion indicating that encryption be deactivated.

141. (New) The method according to claim 139, further comprising:
associating a precode with the bar code, where the precode indicates that the bar code is a telephone number, where the telephone number is associated with the entity.

142. (New) The method according to claim 137, wherein receiving the information represented by the prefix portion further comprises a bar code scanner receiving the information represented in the prefix portion.

143. (New) The method according to claim 142, further comprising:
displaying at least a portion of the information represented in the bar code on a local display associated with the bar code scanner based on the prefix portion indicating that encryption be deactivated.

144. (New) The method according to claim 142, further comprising:

associating a precode with the bar code, where the precode indicates that the bar code is a telephone number, where the telephone number is associated with the entity.